

15 JAN 20 - Wednesday in the First Week after Epiphany.

Readings: 1 Sam 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45

Sometimes in our spiritual lives, we might have the temptation to self-satisfaction. When things go well, when we have success over ourselves or with helping others, when we've done truly marvellous things for God, we can easily be tempted to stay where we are, and try and continue in the same pattern. Yet in today's readings we are given a reminder that "the way things are" are not necessarily how God wants to keep them.

When Samuel hears the voice of God, he thinks it is Eli. Surely, he had heard Eli call to him before. Eli was old, he'd probably had previous cause to call out to Samuel in the night. But Eli perceives that something new is happening, God is breaking through the old routine for the young apprentice priest/prophet boy Samuel. It is not to Eli that Samuel needs to say, "Here I am," but for him rather to say to the Lord, "Speak, for your servant hears." And in that new response, the whole history of Israel is forever changed.

Similarly with Jesus. He doesn't stay in Capernaum, where, because of his mighty works, "Every one is searching for [him]." Maybe he could have though. Maybe he could have stayed there, built up his following, his reputation, the catalogue of his miracles, and there, converted a vast crowd, saved more and more people from their sinfulness, healed more of the sick, cast out more demons, until he became a sort of fixture of the local scene - a sort of professional wonder-worker, the guy you go to for certain problems. How quickly, though, would have we been inoculated to him, to that sort of cult! How much would we have come to take his miracles for granted! But No. No. Jesus doesn't do that. He doesn't swap the business of carpentry for the guru trade. If that were his intent, no doubt God would have become Incarnate in our multimedia, instant communication, self-help and tele-marketer age.

And he said to them, "Let us **go on** to the *next* towns, that I may preach there *also*, for *that* is why I came out."

Jesus, in his mission to take us all to the eternal Sabbath rest, does not rest from doing his Father's work. He doesn't take it easy, and just fall into a comfortable self-satisfied, familiar routine. Instead, he goes throughout Galilee preaching and casting out demons. He moves on, impelled by the Spirit.

Notice the pattern of his love, though in this passage. It does start with home - Peter's home, Peter's Mother-in-Law. Then it moves to the immediate surrounds, the town of Capernaum. But it does not stay there. He then goes out further and further. So in the spiritual journey. We don't stay at home. We are called to "go on". We should never be satisfied with our progress, we should always go on, go out.

We must be open to the Holy Spirit calling us, and our response needs to be, "Speak, for your servant hears," which translates into our action for God - therefore, may we always say with Christ Jesus, "Let us go on!"